

flags on grave markers in common cemeteries, I am reminded of why we are free. Those brave and honored Americans gave the ultimate "See to America".

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JULIA CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 14, 1999

Ms. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent on Monday, April 12, 1999, and Tuesday, April 13, 1999, attending a family funeral, and as a result, missed rollcall votes 78 through 82. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall vote 78, "yes" on rollcall vote 79, "yes" on rollcall 80, "yes" or rollcall 81, and "yes" on rollcall 82.

HONORING HOUSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT OFFICER VONDA HIGGINS

HON. KEN BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 14, 1999

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Houston Police Department Officer Vonda Higgins, who is being honored as the Honorary Chairlady of the Top Ladies of Distinction on April 10, 1999. Officer Higgins is certainly deserving of this honor.

Mr. Speaker, police officers across the country show courage and bravery everyday. Vonda Higgins displayed this courage as an undercover narcotics officer protecting Houstonians from the evils of drugs. For five years she worked in this role to stop criminals from dealing drugs and ruining lives and neighborhoods. Vonda Higgins loved her work and was passionate about her work.

On February 4, 1998, Officer Higgins was working to stop drug dealers from overrunning an area on Bellaire Boulevard where children played, Buddhists worshipped, and families lived. On that day, while trying to apprehend a criminal, Officer Higgins was shot by an assailant. The bullet entered her neck and paralyzed her. She is now in a wheelchair.

Mr. Speaker, Vonda Higgins now faces a new challenge in life. She is facing that challenge with the same dignity, courage, passion, and integrity that she displayed while on the job. She is supported by loving parents and a new dog, "Latin," named after a fellow police officer.

Fortunately, the perpetrator of this despicable act of cowardice was charged and sentenced to 24 years in prison. The effects of Vonda Higgins and the efforts of the Houston Police Department have stopped the scourge of deadly drugs into the area on far west Bellaire Boulevard. Instead of criminals and needles, flags and balloons fly in front of the landscaped entrance of the Arbor Daily Ashford.

Mr. Speaker, Vonda Higgins is an inspiration to all of us working to make this world a better and safer place for our children and our neighbors. We wish her Godspeed as she recovers from this terrible tragedy. We wish her the best and with hard work and determined prayers, we know she will overcome.

IN MEMORY OF THE LATE PAUL
WILLIAM TANNER**HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 14, 1999

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, northwest Indiana lost an outstanding citizen last month. Paul William Tanner, Sr., who devoted his life to our county, passed away on March 10, 1999.

Throughout his life, Mr. Tanner served as an exceptional example of a good American. As a United States Army World War II veteran of the North African campaign against General Rommel, Mr. Tanner demonstrated the enduring qualities of loyalty, honor, devotion, and service to our country.

While serving in the Armed Forces during World War II, he suffered shrapnel wounds and was captured by the Germans. Following his capture, he was forced to march to Tunis, the capital of Tunisia, from where he was flown to Italy, where he remained for about a month. During his stay in Italy, he was fed one small bowl of cabbage daily. From Italy, he was forced to march to various countries, including Austria and Germany. As a prisoner of war, Mr. Tanner was required to work on a farm thrashing barley, and while performing this difficult manual labor, he inhaled thick dust which weakened his lungs. He contracted tuberculosis, which led to a lifelong debilitating battle with bronchitis and emphysema. After gaining his freedom and returning to the United States, Mr. Tanner completed his college education and became a public school teacher. His weakened lungs forced him to take an early retirement and led to his eventual death at the age of 76.

Mr. Speaker and my distinguished colleagues, I ask you to join me in commending Mr. Paul William Tanner, Sr., for his dedication to this country. His family and friends can be proud of his strong devotion and service to the United States. He will be missed by all who loved him.

H.R. 1285, THE CANCER SCREENING
COVERAGE ACT OF 1999**HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 14, 1999

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss a very important bipartisan piece of health legislation—H.R. 1285, The Cancer Screening Coverage Act of 1999 (CASCA). This bill was recently introduced by myself and Representative SUE KELLY. It provides coverage for cancer screening to private insurance patients.

Cancer is extremely prevalent in the United States. It is the second leading cause of death in the United States and, according to the Centers for Disease Control, almost half of these deaths are among women. One out of every 4 deaths is from cancer. The American Cancer Society has said that approximately 563,100 Americans will die from this disease this year. That's 1,500 cancer-related deaths per day. Everyone is at risk. Men have a 1 in 2 lifetime risk of developing or dying from can-

cer and women have a 1 in 3 lifetime risk. Those are pretty high odds.

Cancer also costs both individuals and our society a great deal. The National Institutes of Health has estimated that cancer has an annual lost productivity cost due to premature death of \$59 billion.

Since 1990, approximately 5 million people have died from cancer. In this day and age, getting diagnosed with cancer is not necessarily a death sentence. Treatments are being improved every day and the overall survival rate has increased dramatically in the last decade. However, according to the American Cancer Society, treatments are most effective if cancer is caught at an early stage. Early detection has been a particular problem for minorities. Cancers among African Americans are more frequently diagnosed after the cancer has metastasized.

The first step that needs to be taken to reduce the number of cancer related deaths is to increase access to screening exams in the private sector. We have already increased access for those over 65. In 1997, Congress gave Medicare patients many of the same benefits that are included in my bill. Americans under the age of 65 deserve this same benefit.

Cancer screening and early detection offer many benefits. Screening is the search for disease in persons who do not have symptoms or who do not recognize that they have the disease. Early detection can extend life, reduce treatment, and improve cancer patients' quality of life. When conducted regularly by a health care professional, screening examinations can result in the detection of cancers of the breast, colon, rectum, cervix, and prostate at earlier stages, when treatment is most likely to be successful. More than forty percent of all cancer cases occur in these screening-accessible cancer sites.

Another benefit is that screening tools allow for the detection of cancer in its early form, when treatment costs are less expensive. With an increased availability of screening, the economic and social costs of cancer are kept to a minimum. We know that cancer screening and early detection not only improve the chance of survival and quality of life but also save money. For example, patients diagnosed through colon cancer screenings at a cost of \$125-\$300 have a 90% chance of survival. Yet, if a patient is not diagnosed until symptoms are apparent, the chance of survival drops to 8% and care during the remaining 4-5 years of life can cost up to \$100,000. Similarly, the initial cost of treating rectal cancer that is detected early is about \$5,700. This is approximately 75% less than the estimated \$30,000-\$40,000 that it costs to initially treat rectal cancer that is detected further in its development. As a society, we can't afford not to screen.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read into the record a statement by a woman who spoke about her own life saving experience with cancer screening at a press conference I recently held in New York City on this bill. This woman had the most advanced form of pre-invasive cervical cancer. If she had waited only a little longer for her screening, it may have been too late.

"Hi, my name is Theresa Nygard. I am someone who knows first hand the benefit of cancer screening tests. In November 1991, nine months after the birth of my second child,